Preliminary Focus Group Results

4 Jun 07

EUCOM Deployment and Community Counseling Support Conference

Joint Task Force on Family Readiness Education on Deployments (FRED) Workgroup

Background

- *Mar 04:* DOD established Deployment Health Risk Communication Workgroup *(DHRWCG)*
- *Late 04:* Online Deployment Health Library launched quietly
- *Spring 05:* Mental health, family readiness expertise added to DHRCWG:
  - Joint Task Force on Family Readiness Education on Deployments *(JTF FRED)*
  - Hosted by OSD Health Affairs; involvement of Office Military Community & Family Policy
- *Summer 05:* Online Library expanded to become Deployment Health and Family Readiness Library

Background

- *Fall 05:* Customer Feedback Initiative (CFI) concept formed
  1. Solicit feedback directly from Library users
  2. Embed feedback options within overall Library
  3. Embed feedback options into specific Library products
- *Dec 05:* NGB, RA, NMFA join JTF FRED
- *May 06:* Focus group planning meeting held
- *Jun 06:* Focus group facilitator training held; pre-test of survey instrument
- *Jul-Dec 06:* Focus groups conducted worldwide for all military services

Purpose of Customer Feedback Initiative (CFI)

1. Conduct a risk communication analysis of service and family member deployment readiness needs
2. Seek user feedback on:
   - Internet use
   - Website quality factors
   - Deployment Health and Family Readiness Library and sample Library content

Focus Group Background

Site Selection Criteria:

- Recent deployments
- Frequent deployments
- High OPTEMPO
- High-profile issues (e.g., medical hold, suicide)
- High family/ troop interest in participating
- Geographically representative

Basic Questions Asked

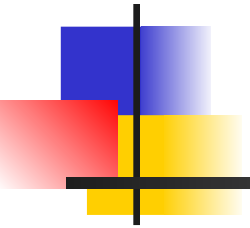
1. What do service and family members need during deployments and redeployments?
2. What preferences do service and family members have for receiving deployment information and support?
3. What do service and family members think about the Deployment Health & Family Readiness Library and its content?

Focus Group Sites (16)

- **Air Force (4):**
  - Charleston Air Force Base, SC
  - Eglin Air Force Base, FL
  - Lakenheath Air Force Base, England
  - Offutt Air Force Base, NE
- **Navy (4):**
  - Miramar Marine Corps Air Station San Diego
  - Murphy Canyon Chapel San Diego, CA
  - Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, CA
  - Naval Medical Center San Diego (Balboa)
- **Army (6)**
  - Camp Zama, Japan
  - FHP Conference (Albuquerque, NM)
  - Fort Bragg, NC
  - Fort Jackson, SC
  - Fort Lewis, WA
  - Fort Monroe, VA
- **National Guard/ Reserve Affairs (1/1):**
  - NGB Conference, Philadelphia, PA
  - Fort Belvoir, VA

Demographics

- Branch/Affiliation to military service
  - ~ 30% Army
  - ~ 40% Air Force
  - ~ 20 % Navy (includes Marine)
  - ~ 10% NGB
- Rank = mixture *(Enlisted and Officer, also includes Family Readiness Officers)*
- ~70% Active Duty, ~25 Reserve, ~5 NG
- Length of service: 1 to 20 years
- Number of separations/ frequency of deployments: 1 to 5 *(range in duration)*



Key Findings

Deployment Readiness Needs

1. **Reintegration**
2. **Mental Health**
   - For Service Members
   - For spouses and children
3. **Improved Communications**
   - Looking to the command to provide on-going communication options, for info/update
   - Need commanders to understand their emotions, pain and appreciate their contributions … and
   - 8 other preferred communication methods *(next slide)*
4. **Local and regional information for follow-on assistance, better access to resources** *(medical, legal, financial, new parenting, coping)*

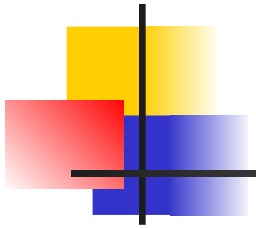
Communication Preferences

1. **In-Person** -- Command-sponsored meetings, events *(deployment briefs, FRGs)*
2. **Weekly Emails and eNewsletters** -- better than having to search websites
3. **Quarterly Mailings** -- Preferred by Parents and Guard/Reserve families
4. **Standardized Information Packets** (e.g. FAQs, resource lists, links)
5. **Military Service Specific Community and Deployment Guides**
6. **Armed Forces Network (AFN) broadcasts for overseas**
7. **Downloadable files to iPods**
8. **Websites** -- Those recommended by someone you trust *("The only way a spouse will find out about them")*

Internet/ Library Feedback

Deployment Health and Family Readiness Library Feedback

- Internet is overwhelming; want someone to talk to…
  - Need combination of website and call center, like Military OneSource
  - Although aware of Military OneSource, no mention of their counseling service usage
  - Websites and links aren't enough
  - "Who can we talk to? There's no one we can talk to."
  - Want testimonials, "what works," ideas shared in an online forum



- Insert DH&FRL screenshot

Deployment Health and Family Readiness Library Feedback

- Majority were unaware of the Deployment Health and Family Readiness Library website
- Most said library and its content were “awesome”
- Must answer this user question: Is this Library a duplication of effort?
- URL/ name of Library is too long to remember. Suggestion: “Deployment One Stop” *(to take advantage of an established, desired concept)*
- Medical information is “scary”

Deployment Health and Family Readiness Library Feedback

- Too much military look, feel, terminology is a turn off for families; need “plain English/Spanish… just help me”
- State when materials were last updated
- Want all materials to be printer-friendly
- Need more resources for children
- Want online access to local and regional resources, links and phone numbers re: mental health self-assessments, medical, legal, financial, new parenting and coping
- Need confidential self-assessments and counseling services

Sample Library Contents Feedback

Servicemember & Family Assistance

For Servicemembers and their Families

A full range of support services is currently available to support servicemembers and their families.

These services include self-help materials, information and referral services, military life skills education, and counseling for individuals, couples and families. Services are available online 24/7, and in community settings during scheduled business hours.

General Resources

- *Military OneSource*, the Department of Defense (DoD) 24–hour Call Center, offers comprehensive support to servicemembers and their families worldwide. All military servicemembers and their families — Active Duty, National Guard, & Reserves — can receive no-cost personal assistance. Tip sheets, audiotapes, relocation booklets, and other materials are customized to meet the needs of servicemembers and their families.

  Within United States: (800) 342-9647
  Overseas/Universal Free Phone: (800) 3429-6477 (must dial all digits) or (484) 530-5908 (Call Collect)
  Spanish Speakers: (877) 888-0727
  Hearing Impaired (TDD): (800) 346-9188
  Website: www.militaryonesource.com

- *Military HOMEFRONT*, www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil, is DoD's Quality of Life website designed to assist servicemembers and their families as well as commanders and service providers with a wide range of information on the military way of life.

  Resources on the *Deployment Connections* web site, www.deploymentconnections.dod.mil, are being migrated to the *Military HOMEFRONT* website.

- *Commanders Page*, contains information about current policy and programs as well as new legislative initiatives, www.commanderspage.dod.mil. This site is produced for flag and general officers, but contains information relevant to all servicemembers and their families.

- Visit www.Military.com and www.Military.com/benifits for general information on pay and benefits, money matters, education, spouse and servicemember careers, scholarships, employment opportunities, and transition assistance

Deployment Health Support

DoD websites that contain the most current news, benefits, health, and locator information include:

- DoD Deployment Health Clinical Center -
  Website: www.pdhealth.mil
  Helpline: (800) 796-9699

- Deployment Health & Family Readiness Library:
  http://DeploymentHealthLibrary.fhp.osd.mil

- Deployment Health Support Directorate -
  Website: http://deploymentlink.osd.mil
  Helpline: (800) 497-6261

- Reserves, National Guard and their families should visit www.defenselink.mil/ra/ and www.guardfamily.org

Medical Benefits and Services

- *Tricare*, www.TRICARE.osd.mil, provides medical, dental and pharmacy benefits information for servicemembers and their families.

- *Severely Injured Support*, www.Military.com/support, provides information and assistance to severely injured personnel and their families. Spouses of severely injured personnel can find additional information on www.milspouse.org and www.military.com/spouse.

- *Fisher House*, http://www.fisherhouse.org/, provides temporary housing for those visiting a severely injured service or family member during a period of extended medical treatment or recovery. Fisher Houses are available near or on the grounds of major medical facilities. You may also call: (301) 294-8560 or toll-free (888) 294-8560.

Leishmaniasis Prevention

For Servicemembers and Their Families

Important Facts

- Leishmaniasis is a serious, but preventable health threat to some deployed U.S. servicemembers.
- The Department of Defense (DoD) Insect Repellent System is the safest, most effective way to protect against biting insects that may carry disease such as leishmaniasis.
- No vaccine or preventive drug is currently available for leishmaniasis; however, highly effective treatment is available.
- If you are experiencing symptoms as described below, you should seek medical attention and state that you have been deployed in an area where leishmaniasis occurs.

What is leishmaniasis?

Leishmaniasis (leash' ma NIGH' a sis) is a parasitic disease transmitted by infected sand flies most commonly causing skin sores (cutaneous form) or affecting the internal organs (visceral form). A rarer form (mucocutaneous) affects the linings of the nose, lips, mouth, and throat and generally occurs after the skin disease has begun. Mucocutaneous leishmaniasis is mainly found in Central and South America.

How does a person get leishmaniasis?

Leishmaniasis is spread by the bite of sand flies that carry the parasite. Sand flies are very small insects and may be hard to see. They are only about one-third the size of typical mosquitoes. Sand flies usually feed at dusk and into the evening; however, some will feed during the day if they are disturbed. Sand flies become infected by feeding on infected animals, such as dogs and rodents, and even infected people. Person-to-person transmission by blood transfusion and sexual contact has been reported, but is rare.

Where can exposure occur?

Leishmaniasis is particularly a problem in some parts of Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, and South America.

What are the signs and symptoms of cutaneous leishmaniasis (skin form)?

People who get the skin form (cutaneous) develop one or more sores on the skin several weeks or months after the parasite enters the body where the sand fly bit the skin. These sores may be painful and may form scabs. The sores can change their appearance over time, and may develop the shape of small "volcanoes" with a raised edge and central crater. Sometimes, people have swollen lymph glands near the sores. If untreated, the sores can last for years and cause permanent, disfiguring scars.

Source: USACHPPM

Sand Fly Feeding on Human Skin

What are the signs and symptoms of visceral leishmaniasis (internal form)?

People who get the internal form (visceral) may develop signs and symptoms such as fever that comes and goes, enlargement of the spleen and liver, reduced number of red and white blood cells, and progressive weight loss and weakness over months or years. If untreated, internal leishmaniasis can cause serious health problems and can be life threatening to people with other serious illnesses or weakened immune systems.

Leishmaniasis Skin Sores
Sources: Walter Reed Army Medical Center & USACHPPM

What is the best way to protect servicemembers from getting leishmaniasis?

The best and safest way to prevent leishmaniasis and sand fly bites is to use the DoD Insect Repellent System. This system is required by DoD Policy.

Sample Library Content Feedback

- Format, length, colors are good
- URLs and phone numbers in resource box too small
- Really liked “Servicemember Assistance” fact sheet *(had combo of URL, phone number and 1-sentence description)*
- Limit “military language,” unnecessary words
- Disease-oriented fact sheets are “scary”

Recommendations

- Institutionalize customer feedback process by continuing routine dialogue with target audiences *(i.e., command leaders, clinicians, service providers, Service and family members)*
- Compare findings with library holdings, identify gaps, fill identified information gaps to improve usability of Deployment Health and Family Readiness Library
- Share CFI findings with participating organizations, other affected organizations

Recommendations

- Develop listserv of family member volunteers to provide feedback on future Library holdings
- Modify Library marketing plan to increase potential user awareness and incorporate Social Media/Social Networking Strategies
- Conduct on-going website usability testing
- Continue to gain additional customer feedback via ForeSEE Online Survey

Next Steps

- Finalize/ “vet”/ post final report on Deployment Health and Family Readiness Library website, provide briefings as requested *(JTF FRED/DHRCWG, CFI participating organizations, other affected organizations)*
- Share data:
  - Summary of Key Findings
  - Secondary level analysis to stimulate key organization action plans
- Improve Library, content holdings

Next Steps

- Modify Library marketing plan
- Conduct website usability testing on an on-going basis
- Maintain regular feedback with military families/ Servicemembers via focus groups, other means
- Expand focus group efforts to other target audiences *(i.e., command leaders, clinicians, service providers)*

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